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# Doctors Differ On Meaning Of Smoking-Cancer Figures

WILMINGTON (UPI)—A group of physicians differed Friday on the interpretation of statistics on lung cancer deaths and smoking

An American Cancer Society staff physician reported on a survey of 188,000 men between the ages of 50 and 69 which he said showed a link between smoking and lung cancer. He also warned of a possible connection between smoking and heart disease which he called more alarming than statistics on lung cancer.

A physician from Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore disputed the link and said he felt impurities in the air and possible allergies to tobacco were more significant.

Dr. Alton Ochsner of New Orleans, another member of a panel sponsored by the New Hanover County Medical Society, predicted statistics in 1980 would show a "stupendous increase" in lung cancer cases.

He agreed with an interpretation of current statistics presented by Dr. Cuyler Hammond of the Cancer Society staff.

Dr. William Reinhoff of Baltimore, who said he had operated on more than 1,000 lung cancer victims since 1932, cited figures from his work which showed the lung cancer death rate was eight times greater among men than among women.

Women smoke almost as much as men, he added, "but they don't go downtown in that canyon of fumes. We walk around in a sea of cancer-producing particles."

In the past 10 years, he said, the location of lung cancers has moved to the periphery of the organ. There is no indication that smoke can irritate that far into the lung, he explained.

Reinhoff said lung cancer in many cases might be blamed on an allergy to tobacco. More than 80 per cent of American men smoke, he said, but only a relatively few die of lung cancer.

"Statistics have made us gratefully suspicious of tobacco," he said, "but lung cancer is a public health problem; not a tobacco problem.

"Everything you breathe comes into contact with your lungs just like sunshine on the skin."

Reporting on the 188,000 men studied by the cancer society, Hammond said the death rate from all causes among non-smokers was 68 per cent below that of smokers. The death rate for smokers of two packs of cigarettes a day was 223 per cent higher than for non-smokers, he said.

Hammond told the doctors that 3.4 per cent of the non-smokers died of lung cancer while, among the smokers, the percentage was about 78.6.

He said the difference in the death rates between rural and urban residents was slight.

Hammond expressed greater concern about the death rate from heart diseases. He said heart diseases accounted for 57 per cent of all deaths while the death rate among smokers was 200 per cent higher than among non-smokers on the basis of his survey.

Ochsner said lung cancer was virtually non-existent 30 years ago. He reported the disease now claims about 10 per cent of all cancer victims and predicted the percentage would be tripled by 1976.

Dr. Douglas Sprunt of the University of Tennessee said the statistics did not show the cause and effect relationship between cancer and smoking. He said he felt the genetic background of the victim was as influential as environment in causing lung cancer.

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